



2011 Legislative Agenda

Community Justice Providers of Reentry Services

Nonprofit reentry services are crucial to the safety and well-being of our communities. Evidence-based research clearly demonstrates that a period of community supervision and targeted interventions lowers the risk of recidivism. We strongly recommend the support and expansion of treatment programs and alternatives to incarceration. Nonprofits provide these services in an efficient, cost-effective manner outside of institutional settings so that formerly incarcerated individuals may re-build and maintain community ties and supports, and break the cycle of recidivism. As the state and its partners in the nonprofit community face an unprecedented budget deficit, it is essential to view the support of community-based, reentry services not as an 'expense,' but rather, an 'investment' in human capital and the welfare of our state.

We believe that the following priorities represent necessary steps to ensure the sustainability of essential reentry services:

A. Support Existing Programs:

Support and expansion of reentry services have historically served as an extensive cost savings measure, which not only increases public safety, but strengthens the very fabric of our communities. In these fiscally challenging times, this strategy is not only best for the populations directly served through the criminal justice system, but for the state of Connecticut. The Nonprofit Provider network continues to serve the state on the 'front lines' through initiatives and programs which focus upon a vast array of service needs. The ability of the state of Connecticut to adequately meet the needs of its residents is greatly dependent upon the ability of the Private Provider Community to sustain a vibrant network, which will continue to serve as the ultimate safety net for Connecticut's citizens at risk.

B. Continued Efforts to Eliminate Barriers to Successful Reentry - Employment Opportunities & Housing:

Support incentives for employers, as well as expansion of 'Ban the Box' legislation. Improve access to affordable, sustainable housing alternatives: Transitional housing, supportive housing, affordable, market-rate opportunities.

C. Increased, State-wide Coordination of Reentry Services:

Support efforts to increase communication and collaboration among all stakeholders in the Statewide Re-entry Collaborative. Serve as a resource, to assist the Legislature and Michael Lawlor, Undersecretary, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning, OPM, in their efforts to improve upon the criminal justice system in the state of Connecticut.

D. Increased Awareness Regarding the Significant Value and Impact of Reentry Services:

It is critical for the legislature and the communities of Connecticut to understand that supervised reentry into their communities – and NOT a system of extended incarceration, is critical to increasing public safety, by ending the cycle of recidivism and strengthening and healing of these families in crisis.

E. Continued Research and Analysis of Sentencing Practices:

Overall, assist the legislature in their efforts to decrease the number of individuals incarcerated. In particular – support efforts to decrease the number of individuals incarcerated for low-level, nonviolent offenses & technical violations. Assist the Sentencing Commission in their efforts to improve upon the sentencing structure / system in Connecticut.